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IN THE CLAIMS

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1. (Previously Presented) A tray apparatus adapted to transport a plurality of vehicle components, each vehicle component having opposing sides and comprising at least one of a vehicle wheel and a vehicle wheel rim, said tray apparatus comprising:

at least two first support members, each first support member comprising a discrete rectangular plate having a length that is substantially greater than a width;

at least one first guide-and-positioning element associated with each first support member and adapted to receive only one side of a first vehicle component;

at least two second support members each having opposing sides and capable of separating the first vehicle component from a second vehicle component so as to prevent damage to the respective first and second vehicle components, and wherein each second support member comprises a discrete rectangular plate having a length that is substantially greater than a width; and

at least one second guide-and-positioning element associated with each side of each second support member, wherein at least one of the second guide-and-positioning elements on one side of the second support members is adapted to receive the only one side of the first vehicle component, and wherein at least one of the second guide-and-positioning elements on the other side of the second support members is adapted to receive only one side of the second vehicle component so as to constrain lateral movement of the first and second vehicle components with respect to the first and second support members.

2. (Previously Presented) The tray apparatus according to Claim 1 further comprising a substantially planar structural member capable of being operably engaged with the first support members so as to support the first support members and the first and second vehicle components.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The tray apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the first and second guide-and-positioning elements are each configured as an arcuate projection that is adapted to be positioned only along one side of each of a respective one of the first and second vehicle components, the arcuate projection extending from a respective one of the first and second support members and defining a concave area, the concave areas of the first and second guide-and-positioning elements being disposed in opposing relation when the first and second support members are disposed ~~in an overlapping arrangement~~to receive the first and second vehicle components.

5. (Currently Amended) The tray apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein the first and second guide-and-positioning elements are each configured as a semi-circular depression that is adapted to be positioned only along one side of each of a respective one of the first and second vehicle components, the semi-circular depression extending into a respective one of the first and second support members and defining a concave area, the concave areas of the first and second guide-and-positioning elements being disposed in opposing relation when the first and second support members are disposed to receive the first and second vehicle components~~in an overlapping arrangement~~.

6. (Previously Presented) The tray apparatus according to Claim 1 wherein, the first and second support members are disposed in substantially parallel relation to each other when supported on a base structure.

7-12. (Cancelled)

13. (Currently Amended) A support device adapted to protect a vehicle component from damage, the vehicle component having opposing sides and comprising at least one of a vehicle wheel and a vehicle wheel rim, said support device comprising:

at least one elongate support member ~~adapted to~~that separates the vehicle component from at least one of a structural element and another vehicle component, so as to prevent damage to the vehicle component, wherein the structural element comprises a common base structure and wherein the at least one elongate support member comprises a plurality of discrete elongate support members that are each supported by the common base structure in a generally parallel arrangement and the at least one elongate support member comprises a rectangular plate having a length that is substantially greater than a width; and

at least one guide-and-positioning element associated with the at least one elongate support member, wherein the at least one guide-and-positioning element is adapted to receive only one side of a vehicle component.

14. (Previously Presented) The support device according to Claim 13 wherein the at least one elongate support member is configured to be supported on the structural element which comprises a substantially planar structural member.

15-18. (Cancelled)

19. (Cancelled)

20. (Currently Amended) The support device according to Claim ~~19~~ 13 wherein each discrete elongate support member includes a plurality of guide-and-positioning elements that are axially spaced apart from each other along the length of each discrete elongate support member.

21. (Previously Presented) The support device according to Claim 20 wherein each guide-and-positioning element comprises an arcuate feature that is adapted to be positioned only along one side of the vehicle component.

22. (Previously Presented) A tray apparatus adapted to transport a plurality of vehicle wheel components comprising:

a base structure;

a plurality of first discrete support members supported by the base structure wherein each first discrete support member comprises a rectangular plate; and

a plurality of first positioning elements formed on each of the first discrete support members wherein each first positioning element comprises an arcuate feature that is positioned to be adjacent to only one side of a vehicle wheel component.

23. (Previously Presented) The tray apparatus according to claim 22 wherein each rectangular plate has a length that is substantially greater than a width.

24. (Previously Presented) The tray apparatus according to claim 23 wherein the first discrete support members are parallel to each other when positioned on the base structure.

25. (Currently Amended) The tray apparatus according to claim 24 wherein ~~vehicle wheel components are adapted to be placed laterally between adjacent first discrete support members, such that~~ one first positioning element on one first discrete support member is formed to be on one side of a vehicle wheel component and another first positioning element on an adjacent first discrete support member is formed to be on an opposite side of the vehicle wheel component.

26. (Previously Presented) The tray apparatus according to claim 22 including a plurality of second discrete support members each comprising a rectangular plate and adapted to be supported by the vehicle wheel components after the vehicle wheel components have been placed on the plurality of first discrete support members, and a plurality of second positioning elements formed on each of the second discrete support members wherein each second positioning element comprises an arcuate feature that is positioned to be adjacent to only one side of the vehicle wheel component, and wherein each rectangular plate of the first and second discrete support members have a length that is substantially greater than a width.

27. (Previously Presented) The tray apparatus according to claim 26 wherein the first and second discrete support members are parallel to each other when supported by the base structure with the plurality of second discrete support members being vertically spaced above the plurality of first discrete support members.

28. (Currently Amended) The tray apparatus according to claim 27 wherein ~~the vehicle wheel components comprises a first set of wheel components and a second set of wheel components with each wheel component from the first set of wheel components being adapted to be placed laterally between adjacent first discrete support members, such that~~ one first positioning element on one first discrete support member is to be on one side of a first wheel component from ~~the~~ a first set of wheel components and another first positioning element is to be on an adjacent first discrete support member is on an opposite side of the first wheel component; and

wherein ~~each wheel component from the second set of wheel components is adapted to be placed laterally between adjacent second discrete support members, such that~~ one second positioning element on one second discrete support member is to be on one side of a second wheel component from ~~the~~ a second set of wheel components and another second positioning element on an adjacent second discrete support member is to be on an opposite side of the second wheel component.

29. (Previously Presented) The tray apparatus according to claim 28 including a plurality of third positioning elements formed on each of the second discrete support members opposite from the plurality of second positioning elements wherein each third positioning element comprises an arcuate feature that is positioned to be adjacent to only one side of a vehicle wheel component from a third set of wheel components.

30. (Previously Presented) The tray apparatus according to claim 22 wherein the plurality of first discrete support members comprises at least four discrete support members.